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THE BARYE MONUMENT FUND EXHIBITION.

FIRST NOTICE.



POSSIBLY it has escaped the memory of even some of the few outsiders who knew of it at the time that there has been an exhibition of works of Barye in New York before. About six years ago there was a small but excellent collection of his sculpture and paintings in oil and water-colors at the Lotos Club. To this Mr.

Cyrus J. Lawrence was the chief contributor, and he is one of the most important contributors to the present superb exhibition at the American Art Galleries, held by Messrs. Kirby, Sutton and Robertson, under the auspices of the Barye Monument Association. He has there sixty-one pieces, making him third on the list, Mr. Walters coming first, with one hundred and fifteen numbers, to the catalogue, and the Corcoran Gallery second, with ninety-five. Smaller collections, which yet add appreciably to the educational value of the exhibition, are lent by Mr. James F. Sutton (fifty-one pieces), Mr. Robertson (twenty-two), Mr. Theodore K. Gibbs (fourteen) and Mr. S. P. Avery (twenty-seven.) Other contributors are Messrs. Richard M. Hunt, Richard M. Hoe, James S. Inglis, J. W. Ellsworth, Theodore Roosevelt, Albert Spenser, and Mrs. Bellina Froelich.

The Committee on Selection and Catalogue, which consists of Messrs. Cyrus J. Lawrence, Thomas B. Clarke and W. M. Laffan, it will be seen, has been very successful in securing loans from various owners; and the happy thought of adding to the exhibition a representative collection of paintings by those of Barye's contemporaries with whom he was most in sympathy has resulted in the bringing together of such a show of masterpieces as certainly could not be equalled in America, and perhaps could not be surpassed in France without invoking State aid. So far as the works of Barye are concerned, the only serious disappointment the committee has had is in not getting certain water-colors by him owned by Mr. H. O. Havemeyer, who is still abroad. A selection from the gallery of the latter would undoubtedly have added several masterpieces to the collection; but, as in the case of some other owners of important pictures in this country, it may be said that, although their contributions would have been welcomed, they are not missed. The only important exception in this regard, perhaps, is "The Sower," by Millet, owned by Mr. George Vanderbilt, and one can but respect that gentleman's scruples against disturbing in any way the famous gallery in the W. H. Vanderbilt house; it being the wish of the family that the collection shall remain just as it was left by its founder.

On entering the galleries, the visitor is confronted by the great plaster cast of a "Lion Crushing a Serpent," which belongs to the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts. The first sight of this magnificent work immediately disabuses the visitor of the not uncommon impression that Barye was only a sculptor of small objects—"paper-weights," as his envious detractors used contemptuously to call them during his lifetime. This great animal is a monumental work of the highest order. It shows that if Barye worked habitually on a small scale, it was from no lack of power to do large work. It enables us to judge with understanding the sculptor of the great works of the Louvre façade; of those placed by Mr. Walters on Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore; of the supporters of Mercie's "Gloria Victis;" of the "Lion and Cock on the July Column;" of the stone eagles on the Bridge of Jena; of the four groups of animals executed for the town of Marseilles, and other important works necessarily unknown to the American public. It

prepares us, when we turn to the smaller bronzes arranged about it, to see them with new eyes; to look not for the patient detail which would be looked for from the sculptor in miniature, nor for the exaggerations which should mark the artistic theorist which certain other critics would make of Barye, but for great sculpture, synthetical, broad and massive even in the smallest of his figures. That Barye modelled "paper-weights," and that Barbedienne has copied them by the hundreds, should be a matter for congratulation among all true amateurs of art. We hope that M. Barbedienne will continue to "vulgarize" these admirable little works until every one capable of appreciating Barye's work, but not able to afford a fine proof retouched by the sculptor's own hand and covered by him with a marvellous patina, may, at least, own one or more of these reproductions, and be encouraged to dispense with more ordinary "bronzes of commerce."

The whole of the first gallery is devoted to Barye casts, wax models, bronzes and water-colors. We cannot, in the present article, stop to particularize many of them. Some of the most characteristic are illustrated

Horse," his "Bull Brought Down by a Tiger," may well have influenced the youthful sculptor. The "Raft of the Medusa," his most famous work, was exhibited in 1859, while Barye was working with the now forgotten sculptor Bosio as "medaillieur." He died in 1824, at which time Barye had gained a second prize in sculpture, and had left the École des Beaux Arts. Delacroix also, with his terribly life-like studies of tigers and lions, must have vividly impressed Barye. The Eastern scenes of Decamps, the rocky wilderness and flaming sunset sky of "The Walk to Emmaus," the glowing color of the "Butcher Shop" may have furnished his imagination with the proper backgrounds for the splendid creatures which he loved to draw and model. It is recorded that Barye passed several weeks every year at Barbizon, where, with Rousseau, Millet and Corot, he sketched and painted forest interiors and rocky foregrounds. But it is evident from his water-colors that these studies by no means satisfied him. There is a story that he often invited the water-color painter Français to visit him at Barbizon, for the purpose of seeing him work, and even copied some of his drawings. And the influence of Decamps and Delacroix, as well as of Rousseau, can be readily traced in some of his water-color backgrounds.

It is thus shown that an intimate connection exists between Barye's art and that of some, at least, of his great contemporaries, such as fully justifies the placing of them together. But even if there were no such intimate personal relations as we have just pointed out, it would still be proper to utilize the occasion to bring into juxtaposition these one hundred and four examples of a school, or a tendency in art, if the reader will, which, though widely appreciated, is, as yet, not critically differentiated from others. The mere fact that people of culture and considerable knowledge of art speak of all the men here represented as individualists, ignoring their obviously common aims, principles and methods, is enough to furnish a "raison d'être" for the exhibition in its actual form. Daubigny, when at his best, was perhaps too much what is now known as an Impressionist to come into line. But if the visitor will bear in mind the general effect of collections in which Cabanel and Gérôme and Merle reign supreme, and compare it with that of the present collection, he will see that there is a strong family likeness about the works included in this latter.

The movement to which the great names of this collection belong was not confined to the plastic arts, nor, indeed, to art altogether. Art but showed in its own way the tendency to return to first principles and to the sources of national life which has been working itself out as a revolutionary force in many other ways besides. The connection between Walter Scott and Delacroix (in the subject of the "Enlèvement de Rebecca") is as apparent as that between Delacroix and Barye.

Goethe and Schiller have had their effect, no less obvious, on French Romantic art. In fact, the origins of the school may be said to be pretty well established, and its opposition to the classicalism and traditionalism of the Academicians is well known. What remains to be determined, and what the present exhibition may aid in defining, are the limits of this particular phase of the Romantic movement in the plastic arts.

It is this same Romantic impulse, so well shown in the paintings just referred to, that gives, when all is said, their most characteristic features to the Barye bronzes. It was owing to this impulse that Barye applied himself so assiduously to the study of nature; owing to it, again, that in his anatomical studies he never lost sight of the effects of life; that he studied with his imagination excited and on the watch for every indication of native force and untamed energy in the caged creatures that he used for models. Whoever will compare Delacroix's "Tiger Drinking" in the present exhibition with one of Barye's numerous water-color studies of the cat tribe will be convinced of the truth of this proposition. Delacroix as an animal painter was more like Barye than Barye himself. The imaginative free-



ANTOINE-LOUIS BARYE.

ENGRAVED BY DESMOULINS. AFTER A PORTRAIT BY A. GILBERT.

in the present number of The Art Amateur, and to those we must confine our notices for the present, returning to the major part of the collection next month. This plan is the more incumbent on us since it will be necessary, in order that our out-of-town readers shall have a true idea of the exhibition as a whole, to set before them some account of the paintings which fill the upper galleries. These are all works of the school which began with the Romanticist reaction, and may be said to have ended with the death, the other day, of the illustrious Jules Dupré. The painters represented are Géricault, Delacroix, Decamps, Corot, Rousseau, Millet, Troyon, Dupré, Diaz, Daubigny. All of these, with the exception of the last named, were in full spiritual harmony with the sculptor around whose works theirs have been gathered. Géricault, of whom, unfortunately, Mr. Cottier's noble "Lion" in repose is the only example, was one of the initiators of the modern movement in French art, and it is more than likely that his splendidly modelled animals were a source of inspiration to the young Barye. Géricault was a passionate student of nature. He modelled as well as painted, and his "Equestrian Statue," his bas-relief of a "Man and

dom, the "fugue" which is only possible to one who has completely mastered his technique as well as his subject, which is to be found to the full in the bronzes and in Delacroix's pictures, as well as most others in the upper galleries, Barye has vainly tried to infuse into his water-colors. Where the mastery was his he used it just as Delacroix or Géricault would have done.

One day in 1873, about two years before Barye's death, a party of gentlemen called at his studio to see him. His wife threw up her hands, "Mon Dieu!" she exclaimed, "he is not here, and will not be for a week. They have just received a new tiger at the Jardin des Plantes." The anecdote is more than characteristic, it is as illustrative of the artist as of the man. Barye was all his life a student, never tired of going to nature, and for him nature may be said to have meant the feline race, its cousins and remote relations. Barye was, "par excellence," the sculptor of lions, tigers and cats. Of other animals, he liked best those whose loose joints, lissom skin and slippery muscles gave them something of a cat-like appearance, at least when in motion. Even in his human figures, as may be perceived in one or two of our examples, he triumphs particularly in displaying the free construction of the animal frame, the movement of the bones in their sockets, the elasticity of the tendons, the looseness of the skin, so different from the firm attachment of a vegetable kind—all those distinctive marks of the animal nature, in short, which are most evident in the cat tribe.

But the qualities that most attracted Barye are common to all the higher forms of animal life. His known fondness for that particular race to which the king of beasts belongs might lead one to say that in every animal he saw something of the cat. But it would be truer to put it that in every living creature he was particularly attracted by those signs of life which he had learned to interpret. His horses, bulls, deer, as may be seen at the present exhibition in the American Art Galleries, are not always correctly modelled. Those who have made special studies of these different animals will find many points to criticise. But there is never absent that feeling of something living under the bronze skin. One knows that it is the bull's backbone that this bear

"Monkey and Antelope" the imagination has almost as full play. The specimen in the exhibition belongs to



ARAB MOUNTED ON A CAMEL. BY BARYE.
AT THE EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN ART GALLERIES.

the Metropolitan Museum. The antelope of the South African kind called a gnu is what might be called the connecting link between the horse and the bull, and it is this that fired Barye's fancy. He has given this grotesque steed an equally grotesque rider, and nothing can be imagined more living than the group thus produced.

In many pieces Barye shows a curious felicity in bringing man and the lower animals together. This is evident in our cuts of the "Arab on Camel-back," and the mounted Arab slaying a lion. It has led to still another theory about Barye—namely, that he was a sort of artistic Darwinian or Haeckelian. We do not believe that, whatever ideas he may have had on such matters, Barye ever attempted to express them in his work. His interest was in animal vitality as he found it, and is as fully shown in those other groups, in which merely animal force, swiftness, and ferocity is shown, as in the illustrations, shown on the next page, of the "Bear and Bull" and the "Eland Attacked by a Lynx."

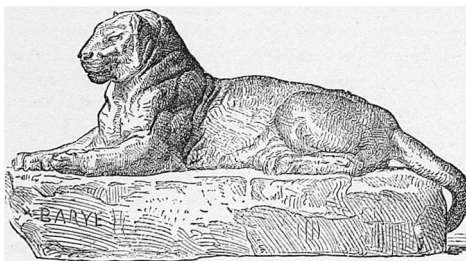
Most of the sculptures are small, the Theseus only being of half the size of life, but there are objects smaller still, veritable paper-weights and chimney ornaments, in which the same intense observation and largeness of conception are shown, perhaps more strikingly



THESEUS AND THE CENTAUR. BY BARYE.
AT THE EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN ART GALLERIES.

is crunching; that should the lion's paw touch the raised foreleg of the horse in this other group, muscles, tendons and bone will be exposed.

Barye's great merit is, however, not so much the knowledge of internal anatomy that he shows, but the imaginative use that he makes of it. Everybody who has studied animal painting or sculpture, knows that it requires some exercise of the imagination, particularly in representing animals in motion. It is very seldom that more than incomplete sketches and studies can be made, and these the artist must mentally fit together. If he has but a common degree of the imaginative faculty, this fitting together will be badly done. It is a sure sign of a commonplace talent when an animal study is carefully finished in all its parts, but ill-proportioned and lacking animation. Many of Barye's finest works look rough and unfinished; but they are always well blocked out and the sentiment of life is never missing. His "Theseus Slaying a Centaur" is a fine example of the true artistic imagination; and in his



LIONESS IN REPOSE. BY BARYE.
AT THE EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN ART GALLERIES.

because of their restrained proportions. An ibis perched on a tortoise, the whole group about an inch and a half high, is as majestic as the sacred bird itself might look

in the shadow of an Egyptian ruin. The opposite extreme of gracefulness and fragility is shown in a tiny statuette of a recumbent gazelle, which is scratching its neck with one of its hind feet. The wax model of a running horse, of which the bronze is also here, shows how every smear of wax added by the artist in building up the little figure was made to tell, like the brushstrokes of a consummate painter. Even the complicated hunting scenes modelled for the Duke of Orleans and cast by the "cire perdue" process, in which Barye was evidently preoccupied by the technical difficulties and advantages of the process, lead one, when done wondering at his audacity and success in this regard, to wonder again at the animation, the spirit of all these little figures, trampling, falling, struggling, fighting. The figure of Minerva taking off her sword, which we illustrate, and of which Mr. Walters shows a proof in gilt bronze, is but one of a group of three goddesses which make the base of a small candelabrum, the upper part being ornamented with a smaller standing group of the Graces. All of these little groups show a thorough mastery of the nude human figure and a decorative ability of the highest order. Barye's taste in ornament would of itself stamp him as a great artist. It is severe, but rich. There is nothing meagre in the lines of this candelabrum nor in those of the smaller and simpler candlestick, round which twine leaves and bells of convolvulus; but not a protuberance nor a hollow has been added for mere richness of effect, and the characteristic form of the whole object is strong and distinguished.

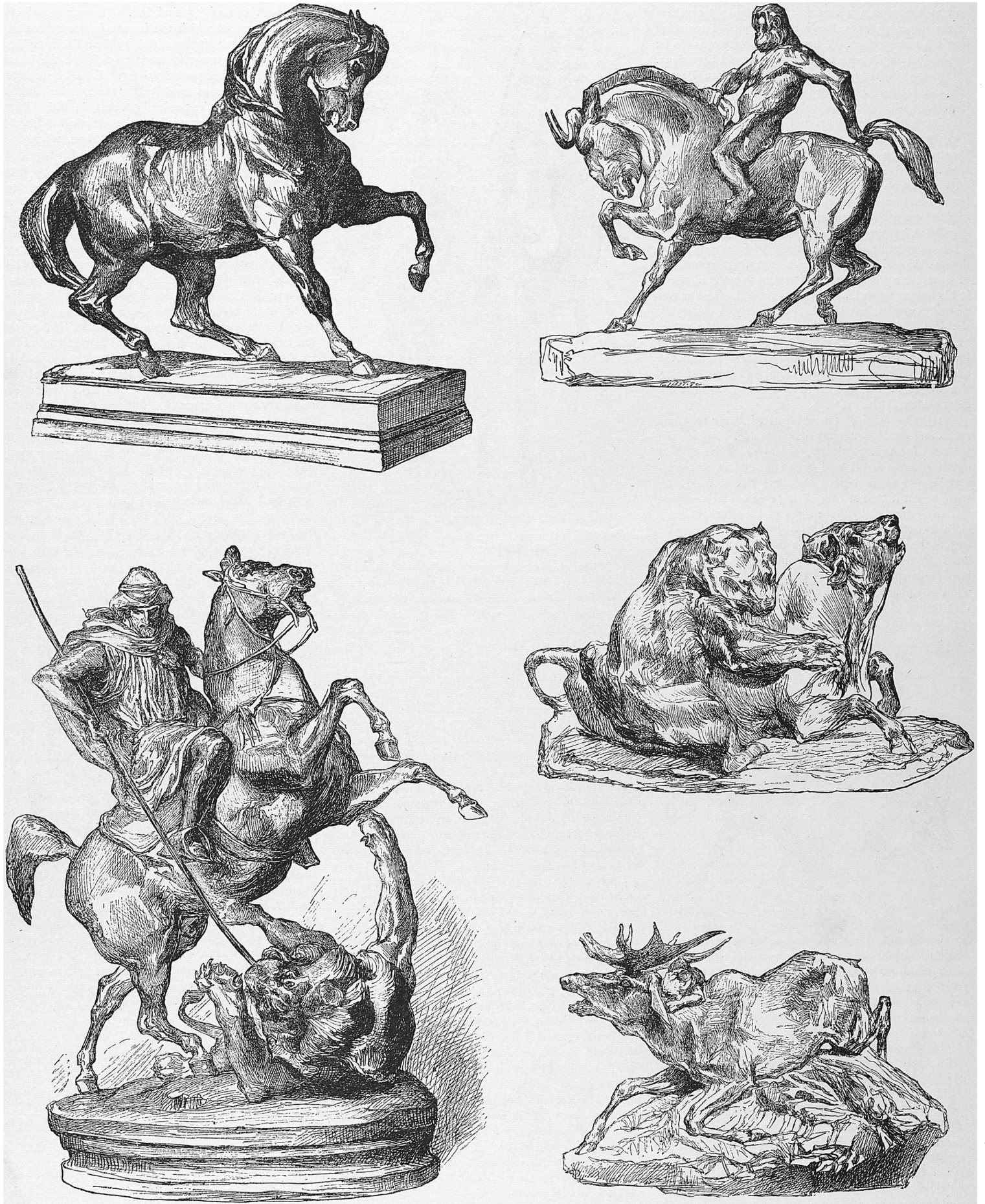
In order to sum up the impression made upon him by Barye's works in this exhibition, the visitor naturally turns again to the great plaster lion and admires once more its huge bulk, the evidence of untold power in every limb and muscle and in the tremendous arch of the spine, the expression of the great beast, wary and threatening, as it prepares to crush with one more blow the fanged head drawn back in another effort to strike. Yet from this he goes with still increasing admiration to the "Theseus Wrestling with the Minotaur" and the "Theseus and Centaur." These combinations of man and beast no doubt fascinated Barye's excitable imagination. He put all his force and all his talent into them, and we consider that they are his greatest works.

It will strike many of our readers, who may be unable to visit the exhibition, as rather strange that there should be so much difference between the "proofs," for which great prices are paid, and the very satisfactory copies by Barbedienne, which may be had, comparatively speaking, for a song. In many cases the difference is not at once observable. There are in the exhibition both early and late examples of several subjects, and in view of the genius that shows in both, it may well seem fastidious to set ten or twenty times the price on the one that is demanded for the other. But Barye himself did not feel that the slight differences of patina and detail that may be discovered were matters of indifference. We learn from our valued contributor, Mr. Theodore Child, that Barye was very proud of his special green patina, which is quite different from the Barbedienne imitation of it. It is a surface coloring of the bronze itself, infinitesimal in thickness, and detracting absolutely nothing from the delicacy of the modelling. Besides this, in the case of a man whose lightest touch had a certain significance, those retouched models must occasionally have gained greatly in expression. We see that it is so in some of the copies from the small wax horse already spoken of, which have plainly more "go" to them than others, while none of them equal the wax.

(To be concluded.)



MINERVA. BY BARYE.
AT THE EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN ART GALLERIES.



SOME OF THE BRONZE SCULPTURE BY BARYE, IN THE EXHIBITION AT THE AMERICAN ART GALLERIES.

HORSE AFFRIGHTED.—A GNU CAPTURED BY AN APE.—AN ARAB SLAYING A LION.—A BEAR OVERCOMING A BULL.—AN ELAND ATTACKED BY A LYNX.